## DEATH OF RICHARD WAGNER.

THE GREAT COMPOSER DIES IN VENICE. SKETCH OF HIS LIFE AND THEORIES-WHAT HE AIMED TO ACCOMPLISH AND THE MEANS HE EM-

PLOYED. A brief cable dispatch last night brought the intelligence that Richard Wagner died in Venice at 4 o'clock yesterday after-He had been for years subject to fits of siekness which his growing age-he would have been seventy years old had he lived till next May-prevented him more and more from successfully resisting. To escape the rude weather he was in the habit of spending his winters in Italy, which, though it never gave his art a home always with its mildness refreshed his body. It was while he was on such a sanitary mission that death overtook him. His career was one of the most remarkable in the annals of art, and his influence has felt throughout the world. His been leaves gigantic projects without a head, for the agitation in favor of what is popularly called "the music of the future' centred in him, and derived all its impulses directly from him. His death will dumbfound his followers and set the world of musicians

With Wagner's death will undoubtedly end, for a long time at least, musical productions in the complete style of the master. None of the present composers of Germany, not even the most ardent devotees of his music, have shown the ability to follow closely in his footsteps.

SKETCH OF HIS LIFE.

Wilhelm Richard Wagner was born at Leipsic on the 22d of May, 1813. He was the youngest of seven children. His father, an actuary of police. died six months after Richard's birth. The widow married again, her second husband being Ludwig Geyer, of Dresden, a portrait painter, who had earlier in life been an actor and dramatic author, one of his comedies having considerable success Geyer always retained his interest in theatrical affairs, and though he died when Richard was only seven years old, it can hardly be doubted that he gave an impulse to the boy's dramatic tastes, Nearly all the Wagner children belonged at one time or another to the dramatic profession. Richard's eldest brother, Albert, was a singer of repute, and bequeathed his talent to two daughters one of whom, Johanna, became a distinguished singer. She was the first representative of Elizabeth in her uncle's "Tannhäuser," and after a brillians career on the stage she assumed two of the minor parts in the Bayreuth Trilogy of 1876. Geyer, who seems to have been a kind guardian of his step-children, proposed to make Richard a painter. But the boy had no talent for drawing; and although he manifested a strong taste for music, he never at tained even respectable skill as an executant. He learned to strum tunes on the piano when he was a little child, and there it may almos be said that his accomplishment came to full stop. "I had hardly finished the first exercises in fingering," he says in his Autobiography. when I began secretly to study the overture to \*Der Freyschütz, ' at first without notes. My teache once overheard me doing this, and declared that I would come to nothing. He was right; I have never in my life learned to play the piano. Still I played then for myself alone-nothing but overtures, and these with the most terrible fingering. It was impossible for me to play a passage clearly, and in this way I came to have a great horror of all 'runs.' In Mozart's music I only liked the overture to the 'Magie Flute'; 'Don Juan' I disliked because it had the Italian text under it; this seemed to me supremely radiculous." Here is a striking indication of the early bent of his genius toward the poetic development of musical forms With all his passion for "picking out tunes" on the piano, he could not bear, even as a boy, a meiody which appeared to spring out of an unworthy

SHAKESPEARE-BEETHOVEN-WAGNER

His first serious studies were poetical. He mad verses, some of which as early as his eleventh year attained the honor of print. He devoured Greek tragedies. He translated haif the Odyssey. Some threw into his hands a translation of Shakespeare. Here he found poetry which stirred his very soul, and transported him into a new world of heroes. He began to learn English with furious ardor, solely that he might read the wonderful poet. He projected a stupendous tras "Lear" and "Hamlet, edy compounded of and a involving such wholesale slaughter that after no fewer than forty-two of the characters had perished be was obliged to bring back most of them as ghosts because there were not enough left alive to finish the drama. It is curious to remark what an extraordinary in-

finence the genius of Shakespeare has had upon the development of modern music. If we were asked to name the two composers who since Beethoven have most powerfully and permanently affected the taste and the principles of their age, we should unhesitatingly answer Berliez and Wagner; and both found in Shakespeare their earliest directing impulse Berlioz began his active career as a composer at the time when the struggle between the romanticists led by Dumas and Victor Hugo and the classicists of the periwig and powder school convulsed the theatres of France; and when Shakespeare was acted by an English company in Paris amidst whirlwinds of delight. Fired at one with love for an English actress and with the wildest enthusiasm for the English poet, Berlioz found in this insurrection of naturalism his most precion inspirations; under such emancipating influence he gave a freshness and passion to French music which had been unknown since Gluck, and a freedom altogether new. Wagner really preceded Ber lioz by a few years in his submission to the Shake spearean impulses. He was too young at that time to accomplish any valuable results, but the influ ence always remained with him, and the splending fruit appeared in due season.

He had been at school in Bresden while the tragedy was in his brain. It was still fermenting there when he was sent to the Thomas-schule at Leipsie In that city he first heard the music of Beethoven Boy as he was it excited him to an extraordinary degree; and after listening to the music of "Egmont" he decided that his tragedy must not go a step farther without an accompaniment of the sam kind. Thus from the union of Shakespeare and Beethoven arose the Wagnerian music-drama-the worthy offspring of such illustrious parentage. Wagner bad little or no acquaintance with the theory of music at this period, nor indeed had he been a serious student of anything; but with that estounding self-confidence which was the secret of so many of his later successes he set about the comsution of a score. He borrowed a treatise or Thorough-bass-for a week. The difficulties proved to be rather more serious than he expected, but they fase nated him. For the first time in his life he found a branch of learning to which he could devote his whole mind. He resolved to be a musician. His family treated this purpose as a passing fancy. They saw in young Wagner only a boy of fifteen, who had failed to master the plane, or to do any other useful thing; who had merely neglected his books for the purpose of scribbling a nonsensical play; who was the despair of all his teachers,—an idler and a dreamer, filled with mystical notions gathered from desultory reading. They scoffed at his tragedy, and tried by a strict course of discipline to keep him at his books. He continued never theless to compose in secret, producing to his own entire satisfaction a sonata and a quartette, and at last venturing upon overtures for the full orchestra. For greater clearness he chose to write these re-markable works in inks of different colors,—the strings in red, the reeds in green, and the brass in black. He calls them the climax of his obsurd ties, but-fireigh what benevolent in-furrention we know not-one of them came

to be performed at the Leipsic theatre. Regular. at every fourth measure all through the piece there recurred a tortissimo pound upon the drum, t which the audience listened first with wonder, the

with disgust, and finally with intense amusement The brief revolution of July, 1830, swept him nto the raging torrent of politics; he was a patriot theoretically at least an insurgent; he consorted entirely with the political literati; he held that no study was worth pursuing except polities; he ever segan a political overture. In this frame of minhe entered the University of Leipsic, not to follow a regular course in any of the faculties, but merel to bear lectures on philosophy and methetic From this opportunity to educate myself," h ays, " I derived practically no profit; I rather gave myself up to every kind of student's excesses, and with such recklessness and ardor that they soo hisgusted me. At this period I gave my people great trouble, and my music was almost utterly ne lected." Perhaps he exaggerates a little in the elf-accusation. No doubt he laid during this perior the foundation of that love for metaphy-ical studie which is so marked in his writings art, and if his music was neglected it i certain that the neglect did not continulong. Heinrich Dorn wrote in Schumann's Aca Zeitschrift für Musik: "I doubt whether there eve was a young musician who knew Beethoven's works more thoroughly than Wagner at his eigh eenth year. The master's overtures and larger in strumental compositions he had copied for himsel in score. He went to sleep with the sonatas and rose with the quartettes-he sang the songs and whistled the concertos (for his pianoforte playing was never of the besti-in short he was possessed with a furor Teutonicus, which, added to high education and a rara mental activ ty, promised to bring forth rich fruit. About this time he had the good fortune to fall it with a thoroughly competent teacher: Theod Weinlig, can tor at the Thomas-schule, gave him i six months almost the only systematic instruction n the theory of composition that he ever received corrected many of his wild and extravagant no tions, and put him at last upon the right road. While he was with Weinlig he composed a sonata. a simple and modest work, quite free from bombast; and this, so far as we have been able to discover, is the earliest of his published pieces.

EARLY COMPOSITIONS.

An overture, after the model of Beethoven, played with applause at one of the Gewandhaus concerts. and a symphony, modelled in a certain measurupon Mozart's "Jupiter " and played in 1833, we among the compositions of this boyish periowhich found a publisher, but quickly passed into an oblivion from which their creator in his maturer years, had no desire to rescue them For a while he led an aimless and wandering life writing a little, dreaming a little, studying a little At the age of twenty he was conductor of the chorus in the theatre at Wilrzburg, an ancient and intensely dull little city no far from Bayreuth. His brother Albert was teacher of singing at Wilrzburg, and Johanna Wag ner, then only five years old, was already playing children's parts on the stage. It was here tha Wagner wrote his first opera, a strange romanti drama called "The Faries," (1833) based upon story by Gozzi, which bears the alluring title of "The Serpent Woman." He says that it contains some good effects, but it was never performed or published, and probably was only an imitation Hardly more fortunate was his second oper-"The Love Veto" (Das Liebesverbot), founde on Shakespeare's "Measure for Measure," to which however, "in the spirit of Young Europe" which then swayed him, he gave a sensuous and extreme repulsive turn. It was begun in 1834 and finishtwo years later, when it was once unsuccessfull performed at Magdeburg, and then speedily forgot ten. Wagner was conductor of the Magdeburg opera at this time, holding that position with son success for two seasons, at the end of which (1836 he found himself out of employment in consequence of the failure of the theatre, burdened with debts in consequent of a reckless and extravagent course of life He did what many other men do in desperate circumstances; he made an improvident and un happy marriage (1836). His wife was an actress at Königsberg, where after some disappointments be obtained the conductorship of the theatre. We know little about this chapter in his life, except that was a very dark one, and that he soon left Königberg to accept the conductorship of the opera a Riga. There is something melancholy in the idea of a man of transcendent genius tying himself down to the drudgery of leading a shabby opera troupe through the performance of mediocre and trivial but Wagner at this period of his life was certainly not conscious of his own greatness, nor had he formed any definite ambitions. It is on reconthat he made an excellent and indefatigable conductor, and it would appear that he was on good terms with the artists who served under him. Hi music up to this time was little more than an echo of Beethoven, of Weber-of Marschner, too, they say, and of some minor composers; and once, having begun an opera on a subject from the Arabian Nights, he destroyed it on discovering that it was only an echo of Adolphe Adam. Some force there foubtless was in these early works, but there was hardly any originality. Magdeburg, Königsberg and Riga were schools in which he learned the prac-

ical details of his art. It was at Riga that he first felt the capacity for nigher things, and he tells us that his ideas were ipened and his ambition was stimulated by the thorough relish he found in Méhul's opera o 'Joseph" while he was rehearing it with his con pany in 1838. He had already conceived the design of a grand five act opera on the story of Bul wor's " Rienzi ": and no stage would suffice for the presentation of so large and splendid a work except that of Paris, then the first stagof the world. So, in 1839, his two years' engagement at Riga having come to an end, he resolved to go to Paris. He had no re ources except a few letters of introduction and the nfinished score of "Rienzi." Together with his wife he embarked in a sailing vessel for London. I was a long and fearful voyage across the storm North Sea ; they were driven out of their course they put into a Norwegian port for safety; and it was a month before they reached England, whence they crossed into France.

IN PARIS.

Mr. Hueffer, in his sketch of Wagner, speculate apon the evil consequences which might have folowed if " Rienzi " had been accepted at the Pari opera. It would probably have succeeded, for a has the same qualities which made the reputation of Meyerbeer; and in that case perhaps Wagner would have been content with the donotful hono of sharing with Meyerbeer the lucrative s not easy to believe that Wagner could ave been spoiled by success at this period of his career, when his individual genius had fair segun to assert itself, and the spirit of the reforme and begun to stir in his soul. "Rienzi" was un loubtedly written under the influence of Meyer peer, but it was in no sense an imitation. The tenlencies which were so soon to make a revolution n dramatic music were apparent in it, eve though it adhered in the main to the dd models and repeated the old operatic ab midities; and if it is more remarkable for the rhythmic swing of its melody and the sense deturesqueness and splender than for those higher qualities of poetic truthfulness and passion which istinguish the productions of a few years later, we must remember that it was the work of a lad twenty-six, who as yet was only feeling his way it deed, but was nevertheless going forward rapid! and steadily.

It is not surprising that the unknown young Ger oen, who had never produced but one opera in his own country, and had obtained for that only one rep resentation in a small town, failed to obtain a hea ng at the Grand Opera of Paris. He tried in vain to d semething with the "Love Veto" at a smallheatre. Meyerbeer, whose acquaintance he had made at Boulogne on the way from London, recom mended him warmly by letter to several managers but letters were of little use, and Meyerbeer wa absent from Paris at this time. Other musician

ave Wagner no help. Lizzt was in the French captal then, the idol of the public, the pet of society chining in the meridian splendor of his unexample career. It is not surprising that Wagner, looking up to him from the abasement of poverty, as Lazaras might have contemplated Dives, should have urned bitter and resentful, and fancied that Liszt lisliked him, when Liszt was only unaware of his existence. Afterward Wagner learned how completely he had misunderstood the great and generouartist, and a friendship grew up between them which was never broken. At first Berliez attracted Wagner nore than the others; but upon the whole he did not ike Berlioz, and Berlioz clearly did not understand Even the performances at the Wagner. Grand Opera were disenchanting. A brillant mise-en-scene and the co-operation of the most popular singers were employed in the interpretation of the most meretricious works; and Wagner became confirmed in the idea, which for some time had been developing in his brain, that the modern opera was a specimen of art in its decadence, and that the true work of the future musician was to destroy it and to reconstruct. He made few friends in his own profession, choosing his assonates chiefly among literary men and artists Meanwhile he supported life by the most irksome of hack-work. He wrote sketches for the Gazette Musicale, in which he described in the disguise of fiction some of his own sufferings and aspirations He made for the publishers " instrumental arrange ments of every imaginable kind, down to those for the cornet-à-piston." For a long time he was obliged in the hard struggle for existence to give up every attempt at artistic work. When, after nin months' interruption of genuine productive effort. he tried to compose again, he says that he had to work himself back into the musical atmosphere. I hired a piane, but when it had co walked about it in an agony of anxiety I feared to find that I was no longer a musician. One of the compositions of this miserable Paris period, performed at a small concert in 1841, was in overture having for its subject "Columbus be ore and at the Moment of Discovering the New World." Another was the magnificent and now well-known "Faust Overture," originally intended as the first movement of a sympnony. This was placed in rehearsal at the Conservatoire, but the orchestra could make nothing of it, and it was withdrawn from the programme.

THE DAWN. It was out of the tempestuous voyage from Riga o London that arose the idea of the opera of "The 'lying Dutchman." That work could never have een written save by one who had been through the errors of the stormy and pittless deep; probably it ould not have been written save by one who had as ed also the sorrows of wandering and exile and he bitterness of hope deferred. So great was Wager's distress, however, that after the libretto was ill ready for him he was obliged to relinquish it to mother composer, M. Dietsch, and when he reurned to the subject later, he made a new text. Rienzi" in the meantime had been sent to Dreslen, where it was unexpectedly accepted at the Royal Theatre, and the recommendation of Meyerpeer soon afterward caused "The Flying Dutchnan" to be accepted at Berlin. Wagner had writen for the Gazette Musicale, under the title of "An End in Paris," the story of a musician who dreams way the richest years of his life in the gay capital, dreams of "wild, fabulous things out of the Arabian Nights; of gods and contrabassi, of diamond shuff boxes and prime donne, of satio coats and admiring lords, of songstresses and five-franc pieces"; and dies at last of hunger. roclaiming with his last breath, "I believe in God, Mozart and Beethoven, and in their disciples and apostles." How often must be have looked forward o the same fate for himself! The news from Dresien and Berlin was a message of deliverance. Ilsarned the money for his journey home by arranging for the piano the score of Halévy's "Reine de Chypre"; and in 1842, with tears in his eyes, he rossed the Rhine. "Rienzi," with its fine spectacular effects, its

narches, its ballet, its noble treatment of the orhestra, and ma substantial adherence to familiar operatic forms, was highly successful when it was brought out at Dresden in October, 1842, under the composer's own direction, with Mme. Schröderdevrient and the tenor Tichatscheck in the principal parts. The first result of this sucess was the appointment of Wagner a conductor of the Royal Opera. The second was the acceptance of "The Flying Dutch man" at the same theatre, where it was produced in January, 1843, with Mme. Schröder-Devrient as Senta. The result vas a bitter disappointment. The opera was a total failure. So simple, so melodious, his work appear to nearly all audiences at the prent day, that we can hardly realize the strangenes fits novel effects to the andiences of 1843. It was far beyond the comprehension of that time; and Tannbäuser," which followed at Dresden is October, 1845, was liked up better. Wagner was almost crushed by the destruction o destruction of his illusions; but it never occurred to him for an instant that he could sacrice his theories for the sake of the public, and earn praises and riches by returning the style of "Rienzi," His imagination was more fertile than ever; his fund of melody was not ex hausted; his control over the orehestra was growing more and more masterful; and if he did not write popular operas it was because he would not, He had now reached a clear perception of the scope and methods of his reform. The details were carried in his latest works to a length which he had not dreamed of in the carrier; but Tannhäuser" shows the whole principle which he afterward elaborated so fully in his literary writngs. The basis of the change he proposed in the opera was the necessity of a common simultaneous poetic impulse for words and mus.c, so that they should combine on equal terms in the expression of a single emotion-the sense never to be sacrificed for the sake of an unmeaning display of vocalism, and the formal patterns of aria, duo and finale tbe discarded without computation when the dra matic idea could be expressed more clearly and forcibly without them. This is the essence of Wagner's reform. The use of "leading motives" in the nusic, always associated with certain ideas in the poem, and recurring singly or with other motives whenever the sentiments they symbolize enter into the development of the drame, is not so prominent in "Tannhäuser" as in the subsequent works, but it is nevertheless there. At al events, it is not a fundamental part of Wagner's

During the season of depression and isolation which followed the failure of "The Flying Durch man" the composer was not idle. He produced at Dresden festival in 1843 "The Love-Feast of the Apostles," a Scriptural scene for male voices and orchestra, and in 1844 a "Greeting from his Faithful Subjects to Frederic Augustus the Just [King of Saxony] on his Return from England," also for male voices. He egan " Lohenzrin " almost immediately after the failure of "Tannhäuser," and finished it in 1847. We cannot imagine that when he put the beautiful thoughts of this most refined and ethereal poem upon paper he had much hope that they would be any better appreciated than the omantic story of the Knight of the Venusberg, for e made not the slightest concession to the popular taste; rather he pushed still further the innovaions which had already been condemned. The parts of "Lobengrin," nevertheless, were given out. before the opera was ready, the revolutions of 1848 convulsed the continent. Wagner took a prominent part in the insurection in Saxony, encouraging the opular party both by speech and pen. Of course, on the suppression of the rising he was obliged to

After a brief visit to Paris he took refuge in Zurich. He obtained certain musical appointments there. He turned his attention to criticism, and produced pamphlet after pamphlet,-violent, transendental, obscure, philosophical,-in which with tremendous force he defended his theories of composition, and attacked the absurdities and falsities of the prevailing theories of art. In the preparation of his librettos-for the texts of all his operas are from his own pen-he showed the true poetic faculty,

rage. Nothing that he ever did perhaps excited s much anger as his assault upon the Jews in his Das Judenthum in der Mpsik" (1852). The ame of "Music of the Future," which egan about this time to be applied to his compos ous, was berrowed from the pamphlet "Das Kunst verk der Zukunft" (The Art-Work of the Future 1850), in which he undertook to explain his principles. They were treated at greater length the next year in his "Oper und Drama." From Zurich, after several years of literary warfare, he went to Italy. In 1860 he appeared again n Paris. The time was not unfavorable for him here. Lisz: had created a great interest in his works by an enthusiastic and intel igent advocacy of them. In the little theatre of Weimar be had revived "Tannhäuser," and derected the first per formance of "Lonengrin" (1850), and of the latter opera be had written a glowing explanation an defence. Li-z''s enterprises at Weimar were topic of universal interest in artistic circles. So it hap pened that Wagner was not unwelcome on his arrival at the French capital. His music, played at ew concerts, became a sort of sensation; and it

but in his prose writings the difficulties of his style

were enormous. He made war upon conductors,

ritics, composers, and singers, and the appearance

of every new brochure was followed by shouts of

length the characteristics of the "Music of the TANNHAUSER IN PARIS. The performances took place in February, 1861.

1861 Court influence caused "Tannbäuser" to be

prepared for the Grand Opera. As a prejude to the

epresentation, Wagner published a translation of

the words of several of his dramas, with a " Lette

to a French Friend" explaining at cor

Everything that money could do for the stage seing was done freely. But it was evident beforehan hat Court favor, though it was ail-powerful with the director of the opera, was to be no bely towards success with the public. The members of the Paris Jockey Club determined that "Tannäuser" should not be heard; and they had their way. For three nights the performances wen on amidst indescribable uproar. At the end of that time the work was literally hooted and whistled of he stage without a hearing. The composer himself has written the history of the scandal, and described with no little humor the rage and consternation of the Parisian habitués of the opera when he refused to ransfer the ballet from the first act, where alone he drama would admit of it, to the second act where Paris was accustemed to sook for it. quote from Mr. E. L. Burlingame's excellent volume of translations illustrative of the "Art Work and Theories" of Richard Wagner (New York, 1875):

On this evening there was assembled in the Grand Olera House, by the amazing efforts of those who had cendered it next to impossible for me even to give away the seats on the day of the first performance, and to have my tew personal threads present—there was assembled. I say, by their efforts, an andience which any cool observer would at once have seen to be intensely prejudiced against my work. Add to this the representatives of the Paris press, who are officially hyvited on such occasions, and of whose bostile course recarding me you can judge from their reports—and you can weil believe that I believe myself justified in speaking of a great trumph when I tell you truly, that the by no means evolution more unandmous appliance than I had ever personally experienced in Germany. The real leaders of the opposition, and several—yes, all—of the musical critics here, who not up to his time done their best to distract the attention of the audience from the representation, evidently begue, toward the conclusion of the second act, to fear that they would be forced to witness a complete and brill that access for my "Tannish second act, to fear that they would be forced to witness a complete and brill mit access for my "Tannish second and began to break which that and agreed upon at the read-rate atom works which they and agreed upon at the code of the net a soft-Theories" of Richard Wagner (New-York, 1875): and auccess for my "Tannowser," and segan to break out will a code tours of lauguter at certain extonwords, which they had acreed upon at the renearsals, by which means they brought about at the end of the act a sufficiently districting disturbance to sensibly weaken the main estation of applicate at the fulling of the certain. These gentlemen had unquivationably observed, at the grant renearsals, from which I had never succeeded in Ecloding them, that the real effect of the opera must be in he performance of the third act. A captally painted seeme by M. Despide. In, representing the valley before the Wartonig in the glooming of an Autumn evening, and, even during the relearsal, produced an effect more of metalors, by which the trans of mind necessary for the proper comprehension of the succeding scales we orought about in sold of themselves; from the standout in sold of the whole performance; the Pigginia Choius was achievably sing and seemeably presented; Elizabeth's inayer, given only and with striking expression by Mile. Six; the phantasia to the evening starp reduced with perfect and pathward deleacy by Morell—these as successfully introduced the best portion of Niemann's performance—the account of the prigrimage, which divava secured the near test recognition of the artists's nowers—that a very exceptional success secures.

such always secured the near test recognition of that have newers—that a very exceptional success seemes sured for this third act at least, even with the most is the opponent of my work. But precisely this set was now attacked by the leader over evered to, and they sought to hunder the produce of the necessary absorbed spirit among the audice by found bursts of languager, which must have come or ending provocation in the most traffic opportunities. Unustuiched by these nostile demonstrations, my grees ald not suffer themselves to be in the least cup seed, nor dut he anderence permit itself to be kept from the set appreciative alteration to t eit brave enneaver, which were effect rewarded by heary appliance; dat the end of the act the opposition was completely feared, when the performers were tunnituously feared, when the performers were tunnituously feared, we have the content that the content the opposition was completely feared, when the performers were tunnituously feared.

had made itself fest, and continued apsinuse had accom-panted maindered those passages of my opera that had nosa quiesly occume tavorties. But from this point no further demboartations of appiause assisted me; in valu-did the Emperor and Empress themselves a second time demonstrate their appreciation of my work. The irre-vocable condemnation of the "Tanniqueer" had been stocken by those who regarded themselves as masters of the thearre, and who all belonged to the highest arisdoc-racy of France. Up to the very end of the piece, whisties and pipes accompanied every attempt at ap-piause on the part of the authorie.

He made a successful visit to Russia after the French disaster, and in 1862 was at Vienna, where "Tristam and Iscult" was in preparation at the Imperial Opera liouse. No fewer than fortyseven rehearsals were held, and then the work was given up as impracticable. Undoubtedly it is very difficult, but the greatest bar to its execution was its noveity. It marks Wagner's complete emancipation from the restraint of traditional operatic forms, and the substitution of "continuous melody" for the customary recitatives and airs. It has now taken its place in the standard repertory of the best German opers nouses, but perhaps the world is not yet quite ready for it-less because audiences are unprepared to understand than because singers are unable to in terpret it.

Soon after the accession of the young King Ludwig II. of Bavaria (for whose cerenation Wagnet wrote the "Huldigungs Marsch"), the wandere ound a home and a powerful friend in Munich There he was sumptuously lodged at the royal cost, and there, until the inauguration of the Bayreutl enterprise, he followed his artistic im pulses free from the anxieties that had harassed his youth. The most extrava gant stories found currency in the newspapers about the friendship between the King and the nposer, and the strange life that both the eccen tric and distinguished personages led in the Bavarian capital and the royal country seats. Most of tnese tales were untrue. The French and German ournals have always been fond of inventing improbable stories about Wagner and fantastic descriptions of his personal appearance and habits. It is enough to know that in Munich at last he could be sure of a performance of anything he chose to write. 'Tristan und Isolde," which Vienna declared to be impossible, was brought out here under the direction of Hans von Bülow in 1865; and the "Meistersinger von Nürnberg "-the only opera in which Wagner makes use of comic effects-was produced under the same director in 1868.

THE RING OF THE NIBELUNG.

As early as the eriod of his residence in Switzerland Wagner formed the scheme of an opera on the legend of the Nibelungs, and began the text. It gradually expanded as it shaped itself in its mind, until it embraced a performance in four evenings, to be given in a model theatre, by a picked company of artists, and with all sories of scenery, dress and mechanical illusions required to illustrate fully the Union of the Arts in the Art-Work of the Future. arts, and make them join on equal terms

Never did a master in any of the arts attempt a in the expression of the poetic emotion. In more startling scheme or accomplish a greater result. The corner-stone of the theatre was laid at Bayreuth in 1872 with impressive ceremonies, and the performances took place with the most orilliant success in the Summer of 1876. The scenes of that extraordinary festival, when emperors and kings and generals and nobles and hum ble musiciaus and travellers from the ends of th earth assembled in the stiding attle Bayarian city o witness an opera in four nights, are too fresh in he public memory to need a new description From that time, as the correspondent of this aper wrote from Bayreuth, the triumph o he principle which we call Wagneriss n music was secure. It was recognized by mostim partial judges as a genuine and permanent reform The first two parts of "The Ring of the Nibelung" had been unperfectly and irregularly representbefore the Bayreuth performance, the prologue "Rheingold," having been played at Munich i 1869, and the "Walktre" at the same place i 1870. "Siegfried" was published in the pian forte score in 1874; but no part of th last division, "Die Götterdämmerung," saw th light until almost the eve of the festival. Bayrenth Theatre was intended to be the stage for the first representation of all Wagner's subsequen works. In writing of the performance in 1876 the correspondent of THE TRIBUNE at Bayrent declared that one of the first results of the refor in the style of dramatic music must be a reform i the German methods of singing and acting, for th artists of our day are entirely unable to interpret most of them unable to comprehend-these ompositions. Wagner was keenly sensible of the eed, and he intended that Bayreuth should become the scat of a new school of arr. This was what I neant when he stated, at the close of the first serie of performances, that he had laid in that dead anremote little Bavarian city the foundation of a notional German music,-a statement which wa nuch misunderstood at the time and in consequence everely criticised. Re intended that singers shoul be trained there for the adequate expression boroughly dramatic and emotional music, not fe he execution of show pieces, and at intervals of ew years he boped to attract thither the tru friends of art for a series of festival represent. ions, not only of his own works, but of the class cal masterpieces and of fresh creations also. Hi new opera, "Parsifal," was to be the programme the first of these gatherings. Originally set for th Summer of 1880, it was postponed for weivementh on account of pecuniary difficulties Later, according to the scheme published in the As tumn of 1879, were to follow, at intervals, the whol eries of Wagnerian operas, beginning with "Th Fiying Dutchman"; but "Rienzi" was exclude rom the list as a youthful indiscretion.

The scheme of a school of art went so far as this hat the tenor, Unger, spent a long time at Bayenth in the study of the legendary and myth eroes of the Wagner dramas. But the influence of uch a project is not to be measured by the num er of its first devotees. Every competent artiwho placed himself under Wagner's directions be came an apostle of the reform. The effect produce by the performance of 1876 was alone sufficient t give a great impulse to the study of the nev nethod of delivery; and even the scores themselve ausi in ti de raise up interpreters.

At the beginning of the Bayreuth enterprise Wag er fixed his residence in the city where his theatre vas to arise, and there his home has been ever since He took for his second wife in 1870 Cosima, the natural daughter of Franz Liszt and divorced wif f Hans von Billow. A correspondent of THE TRIB NE, visiting Wagner in 1875, furnished this de-

cription of the man and of his home:

The smallest boy in Bayrenth knows where Wagnetees. In fact one might aimost find his house with hives shut. It is a plain symmetrical structure of unobjects architecture, but nevertheless an innovation who prevailing gable-rooted monotony of the place, an a further distinguished by a few acres of garden in sosed by a high ence, which is no but however to the public gaze. The garden is laid out with simplicity, well stocked with young freer, and contain does a small conservatory. Over the ports of the composer's door, under a large en anatte pletare, there is inscribed in conspleuous capitathe hautismal name of this house and some—wakafired. Fwe lines in good letters distributed on each side of the toorway explain this curious designation:

Hier we mean wähnen Frieden (and cription of the man and of his home:

"Hier wo mein Wähnen Frieden fand Sei dieses Haus von mir benaunt."

"Hing wo mein Wähnen Frieden land Sei dieses Haus von mir benaunt."

Perhaps this would be an equally good designation of the theatre which stands upon the hill. No double the cost Warner not a little sum to give freedom ampeace to these Faucles only one of which this housepresents. The exterior meeed, does not induces one with its magnificence, but the induces one with its magnificence, but the induces one with its magnificence, but the meil led me into a broad, specious hall, in which stood a large grand plane. The parlor or invrary, a room which seemes admirably to combine both functions, opened of this hall, and to this I was conducted. Here we nother grand plane, and from the porch as I suffer he house I heard still another, so that the composer he aken care tool he shall have sufficient opportunity to mis musical funcies. The library is furnished in the most samptious manner, the charactered bony, a magnificent chandelier pendant from the ceiting, and on threshes of the room costiv case flied with cooks elegantly bound in red and gold to matcut fe furniture. I could no help thicking, while viewing this moyal spartment, of warner's own story of the fate of the poor Patis must sides of the room costly cases filled with cooks elegant; bound in red and gold to matea the furniture. I could no help thiskins, while viewing this moyal apartment, o wagner's own story of the fate of the poor Parts muss clan, and wondered if he ever dreamed when he wro it that he would have such a contortable and elegan place to die in. No one of Wagner's en mies. I believe would accuse him of using muste merely as a gold mine. No one ever loved art or muste more passionally for lower sake, and I, ave no doubt that he considers this accumulation of wealth as one of the least of his reconnected.

nemess. So I thought when the door opened and Wagne entered.

No one that sees him for the first time can fail to be struck by his appearance. If his face diseli were no struck by his appearance. If his face diseli were no struck by his appearance. If his face diseli were no struck by his appearance. If his face diseli were no struck by his appearance. If his face diseli were no struck by his appearance in the his and the high the high to he how the high to he how his appearance in the his and his appearance in the his app penses. So I thought when the door opened and Wagne entered.

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Besides the works mentioned above, Wagner wrote three important orchestral composi namely, the "Siegfried Idyl," in celebration of the birthday of his sen; the "Kaiser March," commenerative of the German victories, and the march fo the celebration of the Centennial of American Independence. He is also the author of a few songs and other small pieces.

WAGNER'S MUSIC.

The character of Wagner's operas has been sexeral times explained at length in TRE TRIBUNA. notably on the occasion of the first performance of the Italian version of "Lohengrin" in this city b. Nilsson, Campanini and other members of Mr. Strakosch's company, under the direction of Sig. Muzic March 23, 1874, and again in the letters from Bayreuth in August, 1876. From these sources w take the following brief summary of Wagner's system: He found music, poetry, dramatic action aupictorial illustration, which were all combined in the theatre of the old Greeks, now unnaturally divided, and all suffering from the separation. In the opera the music, so-called, has usurped every thing and become degraded in its isolation; w have a string of unmeaning arias and dry recittives to which the poet is asked to supply nothing but a scaffolding of more or less stupid word Wagner undertook to reunite the long separates

fact, according to him, every art reaches a point of development where it can go no further alone, but demands the help of another art to complete its utterance. Verse has been ennobled and refined until it almost melts into music; Beethoven in his Choral Symphony attained a height where the resources of the orchestra failed him and he had to invoke the aid of the poet. Following out this principle, Wagner reached the conclusion that the ideal musical drama was one in which poet and composer should work ogether by a single impulse toward the expression of one identical emotion. Verse and melody would then surrender each some of its exclusive claims for the sake of the greater effect to be produced by their perfect combination. thus he was led by degrees to abandon he set aria and the formal recitative altogether and ubstitute for them a kind of " continuous melody ' which lent itself readily to the expression of the nost varied and rapidly changing emotions. Every hought, we may say every word, came to have its ppropriate musical phrase; every prominent idea a the drama was distinguished by its own succesion of musical sounds, called the "lealing motive," cenerally heard in the orchestra, and repeated frequently as the idea recurred; and these motives and phrases were continually elaborated and comsined in the most beautiful and ingenious ways. In word, Wagner turned into the opera the full rich stream of the music of Beethoven; and what he ays of the construction of this master's symphonies may be said with equal truth of the construction of is own operas: "The entirely new result of this nethod was the development of melody by the most perfect elaboration of ail the motives contained in it, with a great and lasting musical work which was, n fine, nothing else but one single closely consected melody." In this greater melody the conventional "tune" entirely disappeared; the set cena and cabaletta, the ordinary operation ria with its introduction, andante, and alegro in regular sequence, the aria pravura, the display-pieces for each of rmeipal vocalists in turn, the recitativo which illed the intervals between the tunes, the duet and he noisy finale were all swept away together. The continuous melody" was bound by no rules, but oilowed freely the portic impulse of the poet. Yet t is the commonest of mistakes to charge Wagner with despising melody. Far from that, he asserts hat music cannot exist without it, and he extends it ver the whole work, whereas in the conventional alian opera only a few tunes are melodious, and setween these lie dry and dreadful deserts. He wrote in his " Letter to a French Friend": " In the reiterated cries of our superficial musical amateurs or Melody! Melody! I find the confirmation that they derive their idea of melody from musical works in which, side by side with melody, there is a susained tunelessness serving as a background for the nelody they talk of. In Italy the opera served to ring people together who wished to be amused of in evening; a part of their amusement consisted in he music to be heard on the stage, which was now and then listened to when the talk flagged; during he conversation and the visits from box to box the music continued, with the object which characterizes it at state dinners-to encourage by its noise & imid conversation. Music performed for such ends and for such conversation fills the main part of an Italian operatic score, while the music that is properly istened to forms perhaps the twelfth part of it. An Italian opera must contain at least one air that people care to listen to; if it is to be successful, intersting music must interrupt the conversation at east six times; but a composer who is able to x the attention of his audience for a whole dozen of times is praised as an inxhaustible melodic genius.' perior to this alternation of barren sound and ar-tickling but unmeaning tunes is "the large meledy which comprises the whole dramatic-muical piece," hardly needs demonstration. Wagner lescribes this "large melody" by a striking metaphor. Its effect upon the listener is like the impression made upon a traveller who leaves the busy town behind him and enters the woods of a fine Summer night. He hears, as it were with new enses, the multitud nous voices of the forest. "Muliplied, they gain in strange power; louder and onder they grow; and however many voices or eparate songs be hears, the overpowering clear welling sound appears as the one great forestselody. This melody will never cease to haunt him; but repeat it or hum it he cannot; to hear is again he must return to the woods on a Summer night. Would it not be folly, if he were to eatch a weet woodbird, so as to train it at home to whistle a fragment of that great forest-melody ? And what would he hear if he succeeded !-which melody !"

In the development of these musical theories Wagner went on from great to greater things. The plan was all clear in his brain by the time he reached "Tristam;" but every succeeding work if we set aside the exceptional comic opera of Die Meistersinger") was in a nobler vein toan its immediate predecessor, and the finale of the "Gotterdammerung" was not only the stupendous climax of the grand progressions of the trilogy, but it marked the highest level his genius had reached. With regard to his texts the case is not so clear. Herote themes exercise a more and more powerful fascination over his muse, but in his later writings a tendency toward the freedom and seusuality of the old semi-barbaric legends is too marked to be overlooked. Nothing could be more innocent or more idvilic than the poem of The Flying Dutchman." In "Tannhauser," if 10 were played according to the stage directions, there would be something to offend, but the chief idea of he story is so beautiful and refined that this blemish may be forgotten. "Lohengrin," which came next, is a spotless embodiment of romance; and in "The Mastersingers of Nuremberg" we deal with pure themes and lovely characters, In "Tristam," however, a coarser passion burns ; and in the trilegy the gross gods and incestnous herolnes would fill us with disgust if the genius of the mustcian did not disguise the license of the poet. There is one scene in "Siegfried" where even this illusion fails. The text of " Parsifal" has been severely condemned, and it does indeed present some horrible contrasts between adoring Knights of the Grail and dishevelled and dancing wantons; but the character of this dangerous drama depends in a great measure upon the manner of the realment. HIS ORCHESTRA.

Violent as have been the quarrels over Wagner's theories of the opera, there is practically no dispute among musicians about his extraordinary mastery of the orchestra. - M. Lavoix, in his "Histoire de l'Instrumentation," though he hated Wgsner with all the ardor of a Frenchman, pronounces him, in the knowledge of harmonic effects and the coloring and resources of instruments, in richness of melody, and in warmth of ex-"incontestably the first musician of our The dominant characteristics of his orchestra are great firmness bined with extreme flexibility. It is capable of the most wonderful delicacy and suppleness in the indication of fine shades of sentiment, and at the same time it posesses a majesty and force entirely without paralled. It is in the union of these opposite qualities that it surpasses the orchestras of Berlioz and Meyerbeer, from whom Wagner is wrongly said to have borrowed most of his instrumental devices. Of course orchestras have been improving ever since they were first formed, and Wagner made use of all the discoveries of his predecessors; but he was a bold innovator on his own account. He had a wonderful fertility in the invention of new combinations of instruments, an instinct for effect which was like Titian's eye for color and Swinburne's ear for rhyme. But apart from this gift in the choice and blending of tones, he had a peculiar way of using the different groups of instruments. Others before him, especially Berlioz and Meyerbeer, used to divide the violins, horns and so on, occasionally and for special purposes. Gluck (not Mozart-us most people suppose) discovered the overpowering effect of harmonies on the three trombones. But Wagner did habitually what the others only thought of attempting now and then; and he did it less for exceptional effects than for

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